

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
USDAO CARACAS
SECDEF
CMDT COGARD
CNO
SEC TRANSPORTATION
COGARD ONSOD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 116537

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, TD, US

SUBJECT: OMEGA TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

REFS: (A) STATE 263608, 1976
(B) PORT OF SPAIN 2864, 1976
(C) PORT OF SPAIN 937

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1. EMBASSY IS AUTHORIZED TO REQUEST GOTT CONCURRENCE TO AN
EXTENSION OF OPERATING RIGHTS FOR THE OMEGA NAVIGATION
STATION AND ITS COMPANION MONITOR SITE ON THE BASIS OF THE
PRINCIPLES ENUMERATED IN PARA 2. PRESENTATION OF THIS
REQUEST SHOULD BE IN LOW-KEY FASHION AS PER PARA 4. EMBASSY
IS REQUESTED TO REPORT GOTT REACTIONS, EVENTUAL COUNTER-
PROPOSALS OR OTHER ISSUES AS THEY ARISE FOR WASHINGTON

CONSIDERATION. AUTHORITY TO EXCHANGE NOTES, IF AGREEMENT IS REACHED, WILL BE PROVIDED AFTER EVENTUAL AD REFERENDUM TEXT IS APPROVED.

2. ELEMENTS OF U.S. POSITION ARE:

(A) EXTENSION OF OMEGA STATION OPERATION DESIRED THROUGH CY 1980.

(B) CONCLUSION OF TOTALLY NEW AGREEMENT DISASSOCIATED FROM

THE WEST INDIES DEFENSE AREAS AGREEMENT.

(C) US COOPERATING AGENCY TO BE THE COAST GUARD.

(D) TRINIDADIAN PARTICIPATION IN STATION/SYSTEM OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT.

(E) OPERATING COSTS (AT CURRENT LEVELS) TO BE PAID BY USG.

(F) LAND TO BE PROVIDED COST-FREE BY GOTT.

(G) NO DIRECT MONETARY QUID.

3. DEPARTMENT IS AWARE FROM REFTELS THAT AN AGREEMENT WITHOUT ANY QUID IS NOT EXACTLY WHAT THE GOTT HAD IN MIND. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE TWO IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS UNDERLYING THE NO-DIRECT QUID POSITION; A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE (THE US HAS NEVER PAID COMPENSATION FOR THE RIGHT TO OPERATE OMEGA AT ANY OF THE EIGHT STATIONS WORLDWIDE; IT HAS ONLY PAID COSTS OF CONSTRUCTION
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AND, OCCASIONALLY, OPERATING EXPENSES), AND ONE OF FACT - EVEN IF A QUID WERE CONSIDERED FEASIBLE, THE ANTICIPATED TEMPORARY NATURE OF THIS STATION WOULD MAKE THE AMOUNT SO SMALL AS TO BE INSIGNIFICANT TO THE GOTT IN ANY CASE. MOREOVER, THERE ARE SOME MORE INTANGIBLE BENEFITS WHICH WOULD ACCRUE TO THE GOTT UNDER AN EXTENSION AGREEMENT (SEE PARAS 5 AND 6).

4. DEPARTMENT'S CONCERN OVER THE "AUSTRALIAN CONNECTION" IS RELATED TO THE WORST CASE PROSPECT OF A SIMULTANEOUS PUBLIC DEBATE OVER OMEGA IN BOTH COUNTRIES, A SITUATION WHICH COULD PERMIT OPPOSITION GROUPS TO FUEL ONE ANOTHER'S CAMPAIGNS. WE WISH THEREFORE TO AVOID, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, MAKING OUR REQUEST FOR CONTINUED OMEGA OPERATION A PUBLIC ISSUE. FOR THIS REASON, DEPARTMENT FORESEES A LOW-KEY PRESENTATION BY THE EMBASSY TO THE MFA OF OUR PROPOSAL AND OF THE PROPOSED TEXT FOR AN EXCHANGE OF NOTES (TO BE FORWARDED SEPTTEL), ACCOMPANIED BY A REQUEST THAT THE GOTT STUDY THE MATTER AND REPLY AS EXPEDITIOUSLY

AS POSSIBLE, AND CERTAINLY PRIOR TO JULY 1, WHEN PREPARATIONS FOR THE ORDERLY PHASE-OUT OF THE STATION MUST COMMENCE UNLESS AGREEMENT FOR AN EXTENSION HAS BEEN REACHED OR IS IN SIGHT. THE EMBASSY SHOULD INDICATE, OF COURSE, THAT IT IS PREPARED AT ANY TIME TO MEET WITH APPROPRIATE GOTT OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS THE US REQUEST, BUT SHOULD AVOID THE IMPRESSION THAT THESE MEETINGS WERE IN ANY SENSE NEGOTIATING SESSIONS.

5. IN MAKING THIS PRESENTATION, THE EMBASSY SHOULD UNDERSCORE THE FOLLOWING REAL BENEFITS DERIVED FROM CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE OMEGA STATION AND ITS COMPANION MONITOR SITE UNDER AN EXTENSION AGREEMENT:

(A) STATION OPERATION RESULTS IN A POTENTIAL INPUT TO GOTT ECONOMY OF APPROXIMATELY 210,000 ANNUALLY; 105,000 IN SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES TO PROFESSIONAL CONTRACT CONFIDENTIAL

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EMPLOYEES, AND A SIMILAR AMOUNT FOR LOCALLY HIRED EMPLOYEES AND FOR OTHER SERVICES.

(B) UNDER JOINT ADMINISTRATION, SOME PART OF THE 105,000 COULD BE PAID TO PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED NATIONALS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO. THE USG COULD CONTEMPLATE THE HIRING OF A QUALIFIED TRINIDADIAN AS ASSISTANT STATION MANAGER OR A MAXIMUM OF TWO TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED PERSONS TO PERFORM WATCH STANDER FUNCTIONS.

(C) THE USG COULD PROVIDE, SUBJECT TO APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS, SOME ON THE JOB ELECTRONICS TRAINING TO THESE ASSIGNED LOCAL EMPLOYEES.

(D) UNDER JOINT ADMINISTRATION, THE AMOUNT OF LAND NECESSARY FOR OPERATIONS COULD BE REDUCED TO APPROXIMATELY 300 ACRES; THUS 500-600 ACRES WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY RETURNABLE.

(E) USG COULD DECLARE ITS INTENTION TO TURN OVER TO THE GOTT, SUBJECT TO APPLICABLE US LAWS AND REGULATIONS, ALL OMEGA PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, EXCLUDING ONLY CESIUM CLOCKS AND TEST EQUIPMENT AS REQUIRED, AT THE TERMINATION OF THE EXTENSION PERIOD. ORIGINAL COST OF THE STATION WAS CLOSE TO 5 MILLION; ESTIMATED CURRENT VALUE, EXCLUDING LAND, IS APPROXIMATELY 14 MILLION, ALTHOUGH SALVAGE VALUE WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY LESS; PRINCIPALLY THE VALUE OF THE PERMANENT BUILDINGS, 5.6 MILLION, AND OF THE 2000 KVA POWER SUBSTATION, VALUED AT 80-100,000.

(FYI: UNDER ARTICLE IV OF THE WEST INDIES DEFENSE

AREAS AGREEMENT ALL "PERMANENT" INSTALLATIONS OR BUILDINGS
REVERT TO THE HOST GOVERNMENT UPON TERMINATION OF THE
AGREEMENT OR DEFENSE AREAS; MOVABLE PROPERTY, HOWEVER
CAN BE REMOVED FREE OF ANY RESTRICTION WHILE THE AREA
IS A DEFENSE AREA OR WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME AFTER
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TERMINATION. IT IS THE REMOVABLE, USG-OWNED
ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT THAT THE USG ANTICIPATES BEING ABLE
TO TRANSFER TO THE GOTT UPON TERMINATION. WHILE CURRENT
VALUE ESTIMATES ARE 2.5 - 3.0 MILLION, THE SALVAGE
VALUE WOULD BE MUCH LESS. AS THIS IS LOW-POWERED,
PROTOTYPE EQUIPMENT, UNSUITED FOR OTHER THAN OMEGA
APPLICATIONS, DOD ANTICIPATES THAT NO FURTHER REQUIREMENT
FOR THIS EQUIPMENT WILL BE IDENTIFIED DURING THE NECESSARY
UTILIZATION SCREENING PROCESS AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY, THE
PROPERTY WILL BE DECLARED "FOREIGN EXCESS PROPERTY"
PURSUANT TO 10 USC 512 (FEDERAL PROPERTY ACT). THIS
PROCEDURE MUST BE COMPLETED, HOWEVER, PRIOR TO TRANSFER
OF OWNERSHIP TO THE GOTT. END FYI).

6. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOTT, EMBASSY SHOULD ALSO
POINT OUT THE FOLLOWING INTANGIBLE BENEFITS:

(A) PARTICIPATION BY TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IN STATION/SYSTEM
MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS WOULD PERMIT GOTT REPRESENTATIVES
TO ATTEND IF DESIRED ANNUAL OMEGA CONFERENCES AT WHICH
INTERNATIONAL OMEGA POLICY IS CONSIDERED (THE NEXT
CONFERENCE IS IN JAPAN IN OCTOBER), AND TO BE KEPT
INFORMED OF MAJOR DECISIONS OR CHANGES IN POLICY.

(B) OMEGA IS NOW AN INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKING. MANY
NATIONS ARE OR SOON WILL BE INVOLVED IN A DIRECT SUPPORT
EFFORT FOR OMEGA, PRIMARILY IN THE MONITOR PROGRAM. SOME
30 COUNTRIES WILL EVENTUALLY PARTICIPATE IN PROVIDING
AN ACCURATE, RELIABLE SIGNAL FOR ALL USERS. FAILURE OF
GOTT TO AGREE TO CONTINUED OPERATIONS WOULD BE A
DISAPPOINTMENT TO OTHER NATIONS WHICH RELY ON OMEGA.
CONVERSELY, GOTT CONCURRENCE TO CONTINUED OPERATIONS
WOULD WIN GOTT CONSIDERABLE CREDIT AMONG ICAO, IMCO
PARTICIPANTS.

(C) AMONG OMEGA BENEFITS ARE:
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- MORE ACCURATE NAVIGATION RESULTING IN REDUCED POLLUTION
BY AVOIDING GROUNDINGS AND COLLISIONS.

- INCREASED ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO SHIPS, FISHING FLEETS
THROUGH MORE ACCURATE NAVIGATION.

- UNIVERSALITY OF USE AS THE ONLY RADIO-NAVIGATION SYSTEM
PROVIDING A CONTINUOUS WORLDWIDE SIGNAL.

- SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER AVIATION, MARINE SAFETY.

(D) OMEGA IS PRIMARILY A CIVILIAN SYSTEM WITH SIGNIFICANTLY
MORE CIVIL USERS THAN MILITARY. CURRENT MARKET PROFILES
INDICATE UP TO 8000 COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE USERS OF OMEGA-
MARINE AND AVIATION COMPARED TO LESS THAN 2000 MILITARY
PLATFORMS. BY 1980, THE NUMBER OF CIVIL USERS IS EXPECTED
TO DOUBLE ON A WORLDWIDE SCALE. CIVIL USERS INCLUDE OIL

TANKERS, BOTH U.S. AND FOREIGN, FREIGHTERS, PASSENGER
LINERS, FISHING FLEETS, RECREATIONAL BOATS, SCIENTIFIC
VESSELS, OCEANOGRAPHIC SHIPS, U.S. AND FOREIGN AIR
CARRIERS, PRIVATE AND EXECUTIVE AIRCRAFT. OVER 20
DIFFERENT COUNTRIES ARE KNOWN TO HAVE PURCHASED OMEGA
RECEIVERS FOR CIVIL USE. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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